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Lan-Cay M-11 EOD Knife

Sharpshooter

- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Fixed blades -



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Description :

The U.S. Army EOD Knife

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I recently received a very interesting looking knife from a friend for evaluation and testing. On first examination I thought, nice job of modifying a M-9 bayonet. Never being a huge fan of the U.S. Military issue M-9 bayonet as anything other than a blade that can occasionally be stuck on the end of an M16, I then wondered why anyone would bother.



M-11 Kit

A bit of research enlightened me as to what I was looking at.

The M-11 is a knife that demonstrates the truth about combat knives. Al Mar is often quoted as stating that combat knives are 90% tool and 10% weapon; I don't know that I completely agree, it's more 95% tool in my estimation. The M-11 is intended to be issued to the troops who disarm bombs and dispose of explosives. These people need a knife to cut things, rope, wire, wood, in general the sort of stuff that we all use knives for. Here's where the problem comes in; knives, such as the M9, Ka-Bar or Pilot's Survival Knife are considered weapons (I guess the upper echelon folks still think troops do a lot of hand to hand knife fighting) and are attached to the same pile of paperwork needing to be completed, in triplicate, as an M16. You might as well lose a machine gun as lose your bayonet, because you're going to do the same paperwork.



Heritage The M-11 beside a Ka-Bar and 225Q

Since EOD (Explosive Ordinance Disposal) folks use their knives as tools, they can and do break or lose them. The decision was made to come up with an edged tool that would be available thru ordinary sources of supply with less paperwork. What was called for is the classical sharpened prybar, what they ended up with was a bit more.

So how do you make a tool meeting this standard, doing it quickly and above all on the cheap? One of the simplest ways is to modify rather than develop. The Army had an item in inventory that had a handle, blade and edge in the approximate size, the M-9 Bayonet.

Lan-Cay is a small company that made a lot of the M-9 bayonets being carried by U.S. troops so they were a natural choice for the M-11 EOD Knife. The U.S. Army's 52nd Ordnance Group designed a tool based on the M-9 that would fit their intended purpose while still being economical to manufacture. Removing the muzzle ring and modifying the handle to eliminate the latching mechanism resulted in something that could no longer be attached to a rifle and could be deemed a TOOL.

Since adoption, the M-11 has seen a few basic modifications, but remains largely as designed.

Mine is the latest version, equipped with the Dolder Holder so named after Lt. Col. Michael Dolder for his efforts in getting the knife made and adopted. The holder is set up to hold a pair of electrician's pliers, a blasting cap crimper, a Gerber Multi Tool, a Mag Light and some electricians tape; all attached to the basic M-9 wire cutting sheath.

It's VERY apparent that the guys designing the M-11 aren't knife nuts; as the .228 thick blade has a flat ground edge

extending up only about ½ making for a steep grind with not much in the way of edge other than the coarse secondary bevel. The Semi Clip point is more to provide a wire cutter for use with the sheath than to effect the point geometry of the knife as the point is still well above the center line of the blade. On the back of the blade is a series of laser cut grooves that are intended to be saw teeth .

The handle is relatively comfortable but lacks sufficient palm swell for comfort during extended periods of work and the cross guard gets in the way of choking up on the blade for fine work. That's acceptable when you remember that what we're talking about is a tool, not a Survival Knife .

Not having a lot of Explosive Ordinance to dispose of or bombs to disarm, I decided to test this knife for the purpose most civilians would use it for; a modern and cool replacement for a Ka-Bar, A Bushcraft/Camping/Survival Knife.

In order to make this tool into a knife it went for some edge work. Mike Stewart expertly convexed the edge of the knife, something that makes a lot of sense as many of the Bark River knives have blades as thick or thicker and are cutting machines. Mike spent a LOT of time reworking the edge and it is razor sharp.

The M-11 certainly wouldn't be my first choice as a Bushcraft knife; it's big, heavy and not especially agile. The knife will perform, it just takes patience. It won't blast thru wood like a Bark River North Star, but I don't think I'd try using a North Star to pry open a crate or pop open a locked door. It's just a matter of using the right tool for the right job and the M-11 isn't a bushcraft knife.

Batoning the blade works, but once again the steep angle and thick blade make the going more difficult. I also found that the knife does a good job as well as a chopper as my trusty old Ka-Bar, so in a pinch it would work at making big chunks of wood into smaller ones.

The hard plastic sheath is exactly the same as the M-9, including the fast connect fastener that works exceptionally well. I like the Dolder Holder, but only if the M-11 is being carried on the side of a pack. I love extra pockets, a home for my multi tool, a small flashlight, another fire starter and some other bits of gear make sense, but I'm sure glad I don't have to carry the M-11 on my web gear with that huge bulge sticking out catching on everything as I walk by.

In all, The M-11 gets high marks on the Cool Factor rating and proves that sharpened prybars have a place if well executed. It seems to be serving well at the job it was designed for and that's good enough for me.



Ready to Roll